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# WATER IS PRECIOUS
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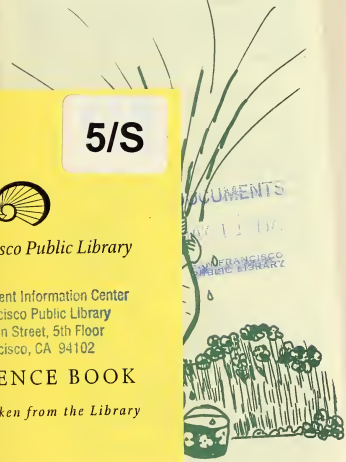

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SAN FRANCISCO WATER DEPARTMENT
425 Mason Street San Francisco, Calif. 94101

## WATER SHORTAGE—IS IT REAL?

Yes, there is a drought in many parts of California, that has continued from last year, when the lack of rain and snow approached record levels for dry winters.

## IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE?

Yes, it can. While the San Francisco Water Department had plentiful reserves to carry its water users through last year without rationing water, this year is a problem.

## WHY CAN IT HAPPEN HERE?

The second dry winter has left Hetch Hetchy Reservoir only about 1/10 full. This reservoir in the Sierra Nevada normally furnishes 75% of our water supply. There has been no real production of water in the local reservoirs that collect from our watershed of nearly 75,000 acres. These reservoirs are less than half full. Although rainfall is about half normal, the ground has soaked it up and still is dry.

## SO? ———

The overall water supply picture is not good. A review of precipitation data to date indicates that conservation of at least 10% is required to avoid extremely critical low levels in all reservoirs in the system this fall. Even if snowfall and rainfall return to normal amounts for the balance of this winter, local storage will be diminished to a level far below that considered safe for local emergency supply.

Future decisions on further conservation measures or rationing will depend upon the amount of precipitation received in the months ahead and upon the results of the voluntary conservation program.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Think about water *before* you use it.

### In Your Bathroom

Check your toilets for leaks. 90% of home leaks occur here. Household blueing dropped into the tank will seep into the bowl if the toilet leaks.

Limit the number of flushes. Don't flush just to get rid of a cigarette butt or tissue.

Partially close the shutoff valves under your wash basin to substantially restrict flow by careless users.

### In Your Kitchen

Keep cool drinking water in your refrigerator.

Save used water (from cooking, washing vegetables, etc.) for watering plants; be sure it is salt-free.

WASH FULL LOADS ONLY in your dishwasher and automatic clothes washer. If practical with your machine, recycle this used water for irrigation or other uses.

### Houseplants

Let the water drain into other plants placed below the plant you're watering. This saves plant food, too.

### Outside Your Home

Sweep the sidewalks, don't hose them down. Any necessary washing should be done with a bucket and broom.

Use a bucket of water and a sponge when washing your car.

Mulch your plants. Clippings, peelings, leaves, etc., even plastic sheeting, piled around the base of your garden plants and trees will slow evaporation significantly, in additon to keeping down weeds.

For irrigation, water by hand instead of with the sprinkler system.

Call on your Water Department for *advice,* not for *repairs*. We depend on you, your home handyman or your plumbing contractor to take care of the repairs on your side of the meter.

Call your Water Department immediately to report any leaks in the street or sidewalks. We have over 1,700 miles of pipe underground in San Francisco and a limited number of experienced crews to keep it repaired. We repair leaks as soon as possible, the most wasteful ones first.

**Phone Numbers:**

558-5357 — Information or advice about water conservation.

558-5081 — High bills, inspection service.

558-4101 — Leaks in the street.

558-3951 — Leaks in sidewalk.

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